Synopsis of Ph.D. Thesis

Scholar Name- Dhritiman Mukherjee

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Supervisor: Dr. Tanwir Arshed

Introduction

The age-old institution of war and its utility as an instrument of policy was perceived to have received its biggest challenge from the discovery and development of nuclear weapons in the mid 20th century. An all-out nuclear war meant that victory could only come at the cost of mutual suicide. Bernard Brodie therefore commented that thus far the chief purpose of the military establishment has been to win wars but after the advent of nuclear weapons, its chief purpose was to avert them. This is mainly due to the ability of nuclear weapons to cause destruction on a massive and unprecedented scale. Thus, in the nuclear era, states were dissuaded from going to war not by the belief that they could not defeat the other side's military forces but by the possibility of being destroyed in the process. Hence, many assumed that war could no longer be employed as an instrument of policy to achieve political objectives.

During the Cold War period the deterrence theorists highlighted the point of mutually assured destruction (MAD) to argue that nuclear armed nations would avoid engaging in armed conflicts as that carried the prospect of escalation to a nuclear catastrophe. These theorists opined that the presence of nuclear weapons contributed in preserving peace throughout the Cold War period more than any other factor. While it is true that the US and the Soviets were not involved in direct military confrontation with each other during the Cold War, at the same time it must also be noted that strategies of fighting a 'Limited War' became nonetheless popular among the US policymakers in the 1950s. As the US was grappling to find a way of militarily responding to small-scale Soviet provocations in different parts of the world, the option of Limited War seemed to be the most feasible as that lied mid way in the spectrum of a conflict where non-use of military force (read, surrender) and an all-out nuclear war (read, mutual annihilation) were the two extremes. Scholars as well as policymakers like Bernard Brodie, Robert Osgood, William Kaufmann, Thomas Schelling and Henry Kissinger realized that 'total war' or the strategy of 'massive retaliation' was no longer adequate in the present circumstances to deal with the Soviets and had to be replaced by more flexible and calibrated responses which made Limited War an attractive proposition.

'Limited War' as the term denotes is a kind of war that is limited in time, scope and space. It

represents a special category of inter-state conflict which happens to be different from other similar restrained military engagements that are classified as Small Wars, Local Wars, Border Wars and so on. Any conflict that directly or indirectly threatens to escalate into an uncontrollable nuclear catastrophe and where this threat compels both parties to exercise restraint in their war operations qualifies to be described as Limited War. The definition therefore suggests that the most important precondition for conducting a Limited War is the mutual appreciation of both sides' capability to escalate it to a Total War as that becomes the most critical factor in sustaining limitation in military operations. Briefly speaking, the fundamental characteristics of a Limited War as outlined by its progenitors like Osgood and Kissinger were- (a) clearly defined objectives that do not call for the destruction of the opponent, (b) political primacy and control over military instrument, (c) economy of force, (d) voluntary and self-imposed rules of war and (e) geographical containment.

While smaller wars involve limitations on tools of war that may exist either because of natural or man-made factors or other intangible codes of conduct desired by religion, social/international law or treaties, in case of a Limited War, the limitation remains in-built in one's national objectives that are not to be crossed under any circumstances due to the uniqueness of the nuclear factor. This is the major factor distinguishing other smaller wars from a Limited War. In a Limited War, the limitation imposed by the threat of a nuclear stand-off remains constant compared to other limitations in terms of manpower, geography and technology that can be overcome by a nation-state when its survival is at stake. Hence, the formulation of the strategy of Limited War proved that not only had the institution of war survived the challenge put forth by nuclear revolution but also its utility in achieving political objectives remained intact albeit in a calibrated manner.

But it needs to be pointed out here that although the origin of the concept of Limited War could be traced to the Cold War experience, it offers little in terms of empirical evidence for critically analyzing the core conceptual assumptions of Limited War. This is because the US and the USSR deterred each other at the nuclear level and the conventional wars were fought by their proxies, not by them directly. These wars were fought between nations that were themselves not nuclear powers and of the kind that never really threatened the territorial security of the

superpowers with the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 being the only exception. As a result of this, while the subject of credible nuclear deterrence between two nuclear armed nations is fairly well understood owing to the Cold War experience, the practice of nuclear deterrence with respect to Limited War or the conduct of conventional war that did not move up to the nuclear level remained far less studied.

However, the scenario in nuclear South Asia paints a different picture where the two nuclear armed states engaged in direct military conflict with each other on multiple occasions. In South Asia, the practice of nuclear deterrence deals with a unique predicament where nuclear weapons, when it comes to Pakistan, perform the dual role of deterring the adversary's nuclear use or blackmail and also seeks to neutralize India's conventional superiority even as Pakistan engages in organizing proxy-war against India with impunity. Since the 1980s Pakistan has been involved in orchestrating a low-cost proxy-war against India by promoting cross-border terrorism. The strategy gained further traction as Pakistan became a declared nuclear power in 1998. Islamabad used its nuclear status as a shield behind which it continued to support cross-border terrorism with impunity. Pakistan was under the impression that its nuclear arsenal would deter India from undertaking any kind of conventional retaliatory action against the terrorist infrastructure breeding inside its territory. It is due to this reason that Pakistan has deliberately kept its nuclear threshold low and ambiguous.

While Pakistan threatens to lower the bar for breakdown of nuclear deterrence in order to deter conventional attack, the challenge for India has been to not only raise the nuclear threshold, but also devise adequate conventional responses in tackling Pakistan's sub-conventional war without bringing the latter's nuclear weapons into the equation. Thus, the interlinkages among sub-conventional, conventional and nuclear war are far more complex in South Asia. The Kargil War (1999) that occured within a year of India and Pakistan conducting their nuclear tests proved that space existed for fighting a war to attain moderate political objectives within a limited geographical expanse.

The war in Kargil also ignited a debate over the strategy of Limited War in Indian military and political circles. In recent times the punitive strikes (Uri and Balakot) conducted by India inside

Pakistani territory also indicates how New Delhi is no longer hesitant to use conventional tactics to raise the costs of supporting terrorism for Pakistan. Though both India and Pakistan have not shied away from employing physical force in the situation of a nuclear overhang, its nature has undergone a qualitative change compared to how the two nations fought wars prior to the overt nuclearization of the sub-continent.

So far both sides have shown remarkable restraint and cautious behaviour in all the crises that occured in the post-nuclearization phase, being conscious of the presence of nuclear weapons. Similar to the line of thinking that emerged during the Cold War, the Indian policymakers realized that the strategy of an all-out *blitzkrieg* war against Pakistan was no longer an option and had to be replaced by the strategy of Limited War that did not breach the nuclear redlines of Pakistan. That said, is the strategy of Limited War in South Asia free from any faultline?, Is it possible for India to conduct measured military operations regularly without risking escalation especially when its opponent (Pakistan) dismisses the possibility of fighting a limited conventional war and belives that any armed conflict could potentially escalate to the nuclear level? The second question is more significant as it "takes two to keep a war limited". This thesis therefore tries to address these questions and critically examine the tenets of Limited War in the context of India-Pakistan relations. It seeks to highlight the factors due to which India and Pakistan observed deliberate restraint in a nuclear crisis and also the friction points that can propel a Limited War between the duo towards the path of deliberate/inadvertent escalation.

Statement of Problem

Since gaining independence in 1947, the two most important countries of South Asia- India and Pakistan have engaged in four wars and numerous crises or border skirmishes with each other. However, a change in the nature of warfare can be noticed since India and Pakistan became declared nuclear powers in 1998. This became evident during the Kargil War of 1999, when both India and Pakistan showed mutual restraint and employed force in a circumscribed manner to achieve moderate political objectives. This is in sharp contrast to the earlier wars, especially the war of 1971 in which India used a *blitzkrieg* strategy to dismember Pakistan. Among other important factors, the plausible explanation for mutual caution during the Kargil War and other

subsequent crises in the post-nuclearization phase lies in the fear of escalation to the nuclear level. India and Pakistan had entered the era of limited war in a nuclearized environment where low intensity conventional strikes has become the most feasible option for India in countering the threat of proxy war emanating from Pakistan. Limited war as a concept has its antecedents in the 19th century but its modern conception came about during the Cold War. when the US-Soviet standoff made total war a redundant option.

But will a straightjacket application of the limited war theory which originated in the Western context be plausible when it comes to the India-Pakistan dyad. Then idiosyncracies of the India-Pakistan conflict has the potential of distorting the methodological assumptions of the Limited War theory. It needs to be seen whether India can undertake limited conventional operations against Pakistan without triggering a nuclear response from the latter. Though both India and Pakistan has displayed responsible behaviour in the wars or crises that have occured under the nuclear umbrella so far, yet chances are there that future crises would not follow the same template. This study therefore attempts to push the boundaries of the Limited War theory further by taking up India-Pakistan relations as a case study.

Research Questions

1. What impact have nuclear weapons had on the institution of war and its utility as an instrument of policy?
2. How did the theory of Limited War emerge in the context of the Cold War and what are its basic presumptions?
3. What kind of transformation has taken place in the nature of war between India and Pakistan if a comparison is drawn between the pre and post-nuclearization phase?
4. How far can the theory of Limited War explain the way in which India and Pakistan have engaged in militarized conflicts that have taken place in the post-nuclearization phase?
5. What can be the potential friction points in a Limited War between India and Pakistan?
6. Does the India-Pakistan dyad follow the Cold War model of Limited War or do factors specific to the dyad distort the assumptions made in the model?

Review of Literature

The literature review has been thematically divided into two segments- the first set of literature will deal with how the concept of Limited War emerged in the Cold War, the second set of literature will specifically account for the nuclear crisis behaviour of India and Pakistan since Kargil. There exists a plethora of literature on the understanding of Limited Warfare, to state some of the prominent works of renowned authors in this area, the study starts with Carl Von Clausewitz's classic book *On War* (originally published in 1832) that gives us an overall understanding of the ways in which war has been conducted since the ancient period and the principles related to it. In this book Clauewitz differentiates between Absolute War and Real War. Absolute War referred to the untrammeled violence, the utmost effort to defeat the enemy decisively, real war referred to those numerous conflicts that are limited in aim and scope. For Clausewitz, Absolute War was an ideal that could never happen in reality while real wars were the statistical norm.

Bernard Brodie's book *Strategy in the Missile Age* (1959) primarily talks about the change in the conduct of warfare and the growing popularity of air power and strategic bombing after World War II. Brodie advocates the theory of 'deliberate' and 'massive' restraint and wants the US policy makers to utilize the strategy of limited war to counter provocations from the Soviet Union where you don't have to use all the might of your military power and at the same time use limited warfare tactics to deter the aggressor. Brodie's other important work titled *The Absolute Weapon: Atomic Power and World Order* (1946), mentions that the scenarios of Total War were nothing but mere hallucinations. He suggested in the book that nuclear weapons could no longer be seen as useful tools for implementing state policy and they acted as 'powerful inhibitors' to aggression.

Some of the most significant works in the area of limited warfare are that of Robert Osgood, Morton Halperin and Ian Clark. Osgood provides us with the view that limited war is a rational strategy even in the absence of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. In the book *Limited War: The Challenge to American Strategy* (1957), Osgood discusses the basic postulates of 'primacy of politics' and the 'economy of force'. He mentioned that force is an inescapable reality that has to exist due to the imperfection of man but its effects can be mitigated through

moderation and control so as to promote social purpose in a manner that is compatible with ideal standards of human conduct. Morton Halperin in his book titled *Limited War in the Nuclear Age* (1963) that limited war is an encounter in which the US and the Soviet Union found each other on the opposing sides and in which the effort of each falls short of the attempt to use all of its power to destroy the other. He also explained in this book how a central war between the East and the West can be kept limited and controlled. Ian Clark's book *Waging War: A Philosophical Introduction* (1988) defines the concept of war and the way in which it should be waged. He has examined the doctrines of 'just' and 'limited war' in this book.

Now moving on to the specific case of India and Pakistan, Sumit Ganguly and S. Paul Kapur in their book *India, Pakistan, and the Bomb: Debating Nuclear Stability in South Asia* (2010) engage in a debate while analyzing the effects of nuclear proliferation in the subcontinent. Ganguly opines that the presence of nuclear weapons would bring peace and stability in the relationship between India and Pakistan whereas Kapur opposes this view by stating that nuclear weapons have led to more instability in the subcontinent with the occurrence of frequent crises that carries the potential of escalation.

Scott Sagan and Kenneth Waltz's book *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: An Enduring Debate* (1995) gives us two opposite views about the spread of nuclear proliferation. On one hand Waltz is of the opinion that the spread of nuclear weapons will lead to peace and stability in different parts of the world based on the principle of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) whereas on the other hand Sagan presents his pessimistic views on the effects of nuclear proliferation, he states that the spread of nuclear weapons in third world countries will lead to instability as they might not be responsible nuclear powers and organizational pathologies like an inefficient command and control structure makes the situation more complex.

In their book *Limited Conflicts Under the Nuclear Umbrella: Indian and Pakistani Lessons from the Kargil Crisis (1999),* Christine Fair, Ashley Tellis and Jo Medby specially focus on the Kargil conflict and the lessons drawn by both Pakistan and India from it. For Pakistan, Kargil indicated that Islamabad's assumption of the international community making a favourable intervention on its behalf in a nuclear crisis was flawed but at the same time there was also the impression that Pakistan's nuclear weapons had restrained India's response in Kargil and there

was scope for more such operations. For India it became clear that nuclear weapons won't inhibit Pakistan from sticking to its proxy-war strategy but there was space to fight conventional wars under the nuclear umbrella.

Peter Lavoy's edited book *Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia: The Causes and Consequences of the Kargil Conflict* (2009) brings together a host of eminent scholars from India, Pakistan and the US to provide a nuanced analysis of the Kargil War. The book is divided into three parts, the first part deals with the motivations of Pakistan for initiating the Kargil War and the way in which it was conducted. The second part is related to the consequences and impact of the conflict on the politics and society of India and Pakistan. The final section illustrates the lessons learnt by India, Pakistan and the US. The book is a comprehensive study of the first war that took place between India and Pakistan after they became nuclear powers. It covers multiple aspects like the nuclear dimension in the war, crisis management by India and Pakistan, involvement of militants and the implications of the war on deterrence theory.

The Kargil Review Committee Report also forms an integral part of the literature review. The two main points that need to be given special attention in the report are- domestic developments in Pakistan and the nuclear factor. To state briefly, the report mentions the role played by then Army Chief of Pakistan General Pervez Musharraf and even hints at the complicity of Nawaz Sharif who was the Prime Minister of Pakistan at that point of time. The plan of Kargil had been on the table for years but it was Musharraf who acted on it. Hence, domestic developments in Pakistan or changes in its power structure is a crucial factor that motivated its aggression in Kargil.

The autobiography of former Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir* (2006) depicts an alternative viewpoint of the Kargil War. Apart from narrating his life experiences, in this book Musharraf tells the readers that it wasn't Pakistan who initiated the Kargil War, it was actually a pre-emptive action taken by Pakistan to thwart India's offensive actions across the LoC. Interestingly, Musharraf also says that he briefed Nawaz Sharif more than once regarding the operation in Kargil.

Devin T. Hagerty and Sumit Ganguly in their book *Fearful Symmetry: India-Pakistan Crises in*

the Shadow of Nuclear Weapons (2005) discusses four crises- the Brasstacks Crisis in 1987, the Kashmir Crisis of 1990, the Kargil Crisis of 1999 and the crisis that led to Operation Parakram in 2001-2002. He specifically mentions that the presence of nuclear weapons is the most important factor that stopped all these crises from escalating into an all out war between India and Pakistan.

Lt. Gen (Retd) Prakash Menon's book *The Strategy Trap: India and Pakistan Under the Nuclear Shadow* (2018) studies how India and Pakistan have interacted with each other after the nuclearization of the subcontinent. He opines that Pakistan's policy of proxy-war has been juxtaposed by India's Limited War strategy. But at the same time Menon doesn't provide a very rosy picture of the strategic landscape in South Asia and claims that the option of Limited War has its own contradictions by pointing to the various uncertainties of war. In this book, Menon also elaborates on the concept of deterrence and the nuclear doctrines of France, China, India and Pakistan.

Manpreet Sethi's book *Nuclear Strategy: India's March Towards Credible Deterrence* (2009) draws our attention to several aspects of India's nuclear policy, like its doctrine, survivability of nuclear arsenal, merits and demerits of acquiring Ballistic Missile Shield (BMD) and most importantly the book also touches upon the complex issue of conventional war in the presence of nuclear weapons.

Bruce Riedel's *Avoiding Armageddon: America, India and Pakistan to the Brink and Back (2013)* essentially deals with US diplomacy in South Asia and stresses how the region is critical to America's security interests especially after India and Pakistan became nuclear powers. How the White House intervened in preventing a nuclear confrontation in the subcontinent is also highlighted. The role played by him in advising four American Presidents is also mentioned in the book.

Debak Das's article "The Courtroom of World Opinion": Bringing the International Audience into Nuclear Crises (2021) argues that nuclear crises should not be examined only from the perspective of dyadic interactions between two nation-states but should also include the international audience as an important player. International audience which includes the UN,

other state actors and the world media, has the leverage to condemn and sanction states directly or indirectly. Therefore, in order to avoid international opprobrium and isolation, states signal responsible behaviour in a nuclear crisis to the international audience. Das takes the Kargil War as a case study in this article and offers fresh insights on the war as well as the subject of nuclear crisis.

T.V Paul' s edited book *The India-Pakistan Conflict : An Enduring Rivalry (2005),* provides us with different reasons for which the rivalry has endured for so many decades and it talks about the truncated asymmetry between India and Pakistan due to the presence of nuclear weapons on both sides and how this has propelled Pakistan to sponsor terrorism in India with impunity.

Devin T. Hagerty's *Nuclear Weapons and Deterrence Stability in South Asia* (2019) discusses the theory of mutual deterrence and the 'ugly stability' that exists in the relationship between India and Pakistan. A chapter in this book is dedicated to discussing the recent crises like the ones which occurred after the Uri and the Pulwama terrorist attacks. In this book, Hagerty again emphasizes the factor of existential deterrence that has played a crucial role in constraining the actions of India and Pakistan during these crises.

Happymon Jacob's book titled *Line on Fire: Ceasefire Violations and India-Pakistan Escalation Dynamics* (2019) points out how the Ceasefire Violations that take place frequently in Jammu and Kashmir can impact the escalation dynamics between India and Pakistan. Most studies dealing with the topic of India-Pakistan escalation dynamics misses out on the important aspect of ceasefire violation that take place due to local level autonomous military factors (AMF). Though CFVs are located in the lower rungs of the escalation ladder, nevertheless it has the potential to spark a crisis between India and Pakistan that can spiral out of control owing to domestic pressure exacerbated by a vocal media.

Salma Malik's article titled "Indian Surgical Strike: Implications and Response by Pakistan" (2020) provides us an understanding of the viewpoint of Pakistan with regard to the surgical strikes conducted by India. The focal argument that Malik tries to make throughout the article is that the Indian actions are nothing more than adventurism, aimed at earning political dividend for the ruling party before elections by portraying Narendra Modi as a strong leader. She is

dismissive of India's claim to conduct a surgical strike after the terrorist attack in Uri and calls it a 'phantom' surgical strike. According to her, such an expression of power politics by the current regime of India will only contribute to destabilizing the existing deterrence relationship between India and Pakistan. In her opinion Pakistan has so far approached India's adventurism with extreme caution but has the ability to strike back if required.

Apart from these books and journal articles, the research has also made a content analysis of newspaper editorials and commentaries published on websites of IPCS (Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies), IDSA (Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis), Stimson Center, CAPS (Centre for Air Power Studies) and APLN (Asia Pacific Leadership Network).

Research Gap

As mentioned earlier, prior to the discovery of the atom bomb, no other scientific or technological development had impacted the institution of war in the way nuclear weapons did. Yet instead of becoming totally obsolete as a medium of change and arbiter of disputes, warfare evolved to survive the challenge of the nuclear revolution. Thus, we got to witness the drafting of the strategy of Limited War during the Cold War even as the two superpowers never refrained from building huge nuclear arsenals. In the second nuclear age as third world countries like India and Pakistan became new nuclear powers, they too never dispensed with the option of using war as an instrument of policy. While a lot of studies tend to focus on the topic of deterrence stability in South Asia by citing the frequent outbreak of hostilities between India and Pakistan, few have actually tried to analyze the exact nature of the hostilities that have taken place so far against the nuclear backdrop. Though the term 'Limited War' finds mention in some of the works, what is lacking is an in-depth study of the concept and a clear-cut definition that enunciates its modalities in the context of India-Pakistan relations.

In addition to that, most scholars who have tried to study the changing nature of warfare between India and Pakistan commits the error of using straightjacket application of the paradigms that originated in the West during the Cold War without taking into account the historical and cultural moorings of the India-Pakistan conflict. Seen in this light, the thesis too attempts to make sense of the transformation of war between India and Pakistan (due to the

nuclear factor) by employing the Cold War theoretical framework of Limited War but where it departs from other works is in its objective of studying the India-Pakistan dyad to question or critically analyze the basic methodological assumptions of Limited War. The thesis wants to know whether the case of India-Pakistan emulates the Cold War model of Limited War or whether factors unique to the dyad like the offensive nuclear posture of Pakistan, Pakistani Army's control over the nation's nuclear weapons and the presence of non-state actors distort some of the presumptions of the model. Also, the timeline addressed by the thesis allows it to take into account the punitive strikes conducted by India against Pakistan in recent times which the studies done prior to 2016 couldn't investigate. It helps the research to draw an evolutionary curve of the way in which application of force has taken place by India and Pakistan since Kargil.

Methodology

Qualitative research methods were employed for this study. Descriptive and historical-analytical study of secondary sources were made. Content analysis of the white papers and speeches were done. In order to correlate the information available in the secondary resources, the study conducted a series of semi-structured interviews of academicians possessing expertise in the area of research and also retired military officials who were in the thick of things when the crisis took place. The list of respondents was prepared on the basis of random purposive sampling framework. They hailed from both sides of the border as well as the U.S.

Scheme of Chapters

- Chapter one is the introductory chapter that lays down the basic idea of the thesis and the puzzle it tries to address. It deploys the premise based on which the arguments of the thesis have been built. It basically includes the background, statement of problem, theoretical significance, review of literature, research questions, objectives, methodology and the plan of the thesis.

- Chapter two titled *'Limited War: Origin and Growth'* traces the genealogy of the concept of Limited War, its emergence in the context of the Cold War as an alternative to the 'massive retaliation' strategy of the US. The chapter also elaborates on the theoretical framework of Limited War by providing an outline of the methodological assumptions made by scholars to categorize any war as a 'Limited War'. The arguments made by scholars like Robert Osgood, Henry Kissinger, William Kaufmann, Thomas Schelling and Morton Halperin who postulated the theory of Limited War find their mention in this chapter.

- Chapter three titled '*Historical Background of India-Pakistan Relations, 1947-1998'* provides an understanding of the various aspects of India-Pakistan relations, especially focusing on the factors that have made the rivalry between these two nations enduring and intractable. The issue of Kashmir gets special attention as that has been the bone of contention between the two most significant nations of South Asia. The chapter shows how Kashmir, apart from being a territorial dispute between India and Pakistan, is also linked to their divergent notions of national identity (secularism vs the two-nation theory).

  The clash of identities increases the stake for both sides regarding the issue of Kashmir. Instead of going for a descriptive overview of India-Pakistan relations, the chapter touches upon only the landmark events that have impacted the bilateral relationship from time to time. As depicted by the timeline addressed in this chapter, the objective is to trace the trajectory of the relationship until both sides became nuclear powers in 1998. It focuses on the three wars that took place during this period (1947-48, 1965 and 1971) as well as how Pakistan exploited the strategy of proxy-war in the 1980s when it was known to possess a *de-facto* nuclear capability. It shows how India grappled to find a response to Pakistan's sponsoring of cross-border terrorism throughout the 1990s. Most importantly, the chapter acts as a prologue before nuclear weapons were introduced in India-Pakistan relations and as a consequence necessitated a qualitative change in the use of military force by both nations. The Indo-Pak wars discussed in this chapter serves as a

basis for comparing the ones that took place in the post-nuclearization era.

- The fourth chapter titled '*Limited War in India-Pakistan Relations'* begins with the 1998 nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan. It goes on to illustrate how contrary to the arguments put forth by the nuclear deterrence theorists, the nuclear tests instead of bringing in peace and stability in the subcontinent made the already volatile relationship between India and Pakistan more crisis prone. This was mainly because the political causes behind the tensions and hostilities between the two opponents were never resolved before the arrival of nuclear weapons in the scene. What the nuclear component did was to trigger belligerent actions from both sides (more so from Pakistan).

  But at the same time the chapter also takes cognizance of the fact that both India and Pakistan exhibited risk averse behaviour in the crises which occurred during the post 1998 phase, keeping in mind the possibility of a nuclear conflagration. Therefore, the application of military force during this period was much more tempered and calibrated. The chapter uses the theoretical framework of Limited War as originated in the Cold War (discussed in Chapter 2) period to study the transformation that had taken place in the nature of warfare between India and Pakistan. The experiences of Kargil War (1999), Operation Parakram (2001-02) and Uri Surgical Strikes (2016) are analyzed in this chapter according to the tenets of Limited War. A detailed analysis of the various dynamics of these crises helps us to understand how the concept of Limited War is playing out in the India-Pakistan context and the various intricacies involved in it keeping in mind the idiosyncrasies of the India-Pakistan dyad.

- Chapter five titled '*Concluding Observations'* essentially presents the findings of the research in a structured manner. By locating the theory of Limited War in a context that is different from the one in the Cold War, the thesis reaches to certain concluding observations that have been enumerated in this chapter.

Significance of the Research (Findings)

Firstly, it is evident from the case of India-Pakistan relations that the presence of nuclear weapons has made the option of an all-out conventional war risky due to its potential to escalate into a nuclear catastrophe. This is the reason why the conduct of war in South Asia has undergone transformation since 1998 as India realized that it could no longer use its conventional prowess to inflict a heavy defeat on Pakistan as it did in the 1971 war. Large scale ground incursions could potentially lead to Pakistan using its nuclear weapons against India. Thus, India observed utmost restraint during the Kargil war even though it had to endure heavy casualties. The Indian airforce were under the strict orders of not crossing the LoC and also the war remain confined to the sectors of Kargil, Dras, Batalik and Mushkoh as India didn't open any other front.

Besides, in the 2016 surgical strikes and the 2019 Balakot airstrike, India was careful not to harm any civilian or military installations in Pakistan and the sole objective was to destroy the terrorist camps to preempt any impending terrorist attack on Indian soil. The reason for India being circumspect in using force can be alluded to Pakistan's possession of nuclear weapons. Conventional strikes that were limited in scope and objectives seemed to be the most feasible option for India under the nuclear umbrella.

Secondly, the perceived threat to any Limited War between India and Pakistan has been Pakistan's aggressive nuclear posture i.e. its first-use nuclear doctrine. But based on the review of secondary literature and interviews with scholars and retired army officials it can be deduced that the threat emanating from Pakistan's first-use nuclear posture has been overhyped. A careful analysis reveals that it is very natural as well as rational for a country like Pakistan to maintain the first-use nuclear doctrine due to its weakness in terms of conventional military power vis-a-vis India. Through its first-use nuclear stance Pakistan seeks to make the threat of the use of nuclear weapons against India more credible during a war where Islamabad finds itself at the receiving end.

But will Pakistan press the nuclear button against any kind of conventional attack by India? The

answer is No and the crisis behaviour of Pakistan so far also underscores this fact. As former President of Pakistan Pervez Musharraf mentioned in the course of the twin peaks crisis, Pakistan will use its nuclear weapons only as a last resort. This means that Pakistan will look to introduce nuclear weapons in a war against India only when all other options have been exhausted and the country faces an existential threat. Until now, India hasn't threatened Pakistan's existence in any crisis that has occurred against the nuclear backdrop. India has observed deliberate restraint and none of its military actions carried the objective of grabbing any significant portion of Pakistani territory as that could elicit a nuclear response from Islamabad. Pakistan's response to the Uri and Balakot strikes attests to the fact that despite having a first-use nuclear doctrine it isn't willing to consciously escalate any low-intensity skirmish to a nuclear war. Though statements have been made by its political and military leadership regarding the use of nuclear weapons in the course of a crisis, it has remained at the level of rhetoric and nothing more than ad-hoc statements targeting the domestic audience.

Thirdly, Pakistan's nuclear brinkmanship has been reflected in the building and deployment of Tactical Nuclear Weapons (TNWs) with the aim of lowering the nuclear threshold and denying India the space to conduct conventional wars even of a limited nature. TNWs are low yield nuclear weapons that are designed to be used in the battlefield as more credible deterrent options. But the research finds that the TNW threat is a mere projection/signalling by Pakistan which it will find hard to execute in reality. Greater usability of TNWs is contingent on the assumption that the adversary would be willing to play the game only with TNWs but this is an assumption that cannot be taken for granted by the user. A war that began with the use of TNWs might not end at that level.

In the India-Pakistan context, unlike Pakistan, India does not differentiate between nuclear weapons and it is clearly stated in the nuclear doctrine of India that any attack on Indian forces anywhere in the world will invite the response of massive retaliation by India. Hence, Pakistan's use of TNWs won't be met with a similar response by India, once Pakistan takes hostilities to the nuclear level, India will have little incentive to limit its response and would go for a comprehensive nuclear retaliation against Pakistan.

While countries possessing TNWs signal the inevitability of their early use, this hasn't been the case in over seven decades. Neither of the two superpowers who deployed hundreds of TNWs in Europe found it easy to use them. Likewise, Pakistan, too, which has now had TNWs for over a decade, has absorbed a surgical strike as well as an air strike but has not retorted to the use of nuclear weapons. There are dilemmas around the use of TNWs just like any nuclear use, especially owing to the unknowns that the action may create. This shows that there are limits to Pakistan's brinkmanship strategy and the 'madman image' it tries to portray during a crisis is also linked to the objective of drawing international attention to mount pressure on India to restrain its conventional operations and bring about a ceasefire.

Fourthly, another positive factor that has contributed in de-escalating nuclear crises between India and Pakistan is third-party intervention, with the US playing the most prominent role. Interestingly, in a nuclear crisis, the decision-making of the two belligerents is also affected by their perception of the role of the international audience. States engaged in a nuclear crisis tend to act in a responsible manner in an attempt to manage their reputation vis-a-vis the international audience and avoid international opprobrium as they respond to a bilateral nuclear crisis. This was noticed in India's behaviour during the Kargil war, when it chose to send signals to the international audience (mainly the US) by displaying responsible behaviour even if that proved to be costly. The restraint exercised by India paid off as the US took cognizance of India being a responsible nuclear state compared to Pakistan that initiated the war. US President Bill Clinton pressurized Pakistan to withdraw troops from Kargil as the war came to an end in July 1999.

Fifthly, though nuclear weapons have induced cautious behaviour in both India and Pakistan and the third party intervention have helped in containing escalation, there are few factors that can still prevent a Limited War from staying limited in the India-Pakistan context. The notion of Limited War rests on the assumption that the protagonists can climb the escalation ladder in a controlled manner, something which cannot be assured if we take into consideration the friction points inherent in a war between India and Pakistan.

One needs to appreciate the fact that India and Pakistan share a border and are geographically contiguous to each other. The US and the Soviets never shared a border and were separated by

thousands of kilometres. Geographical proximity complicates the situation as the warning time is woefully inadequate to detect and react to incoming missiles that have very short flight time. Fear generated during a military crisis can also impinge on the decision-making process, which in the case of Pakistan is heavily or completely influenced by the military. At times military forces tend to act on a logic of their own that is detached from the political objectives and orders provided by the civilian supervisors. This makes escalation control difficult especially at the military level.

The Indian army has always acted in accordance with the objectives outlined by the civilian authorities but in the case of Pakistan this becomes a problem. Thus, primacy of political objectives which is an important presumption of the theory of Limited War gets distorted in the Indo-Pak scenario owing specifically to the dominance of the Pakistan army in the decision making process of their nation. The Kargil war was planned secretly by a small coterie of Pakistani military officials and the civilian government of Nawaz Sharif had little clue of it, even if he was briefed by his army chief regarding the operation, the former did not disclose all the details.

The India-Pakistan nuclear equation is also characterized by limited force structures that depend on aircraft and missile capability for delivery. Both these capabilities are amenable to dual use that can carry both conventional as well as nuclear warheads. In a situation of war, it would be very difficult to distinguish between an aircraft carrying conventional weapons and one carrying nuclear weapons and the chances of miscalculation or misperception remains high.

The presence of non-state actors in India-Pakistan relations is also an aspect that cannot be overlooked. The chances of an anti-Indian terrorist group getting hold of a nuclear bomb (due to apprehensions regarding nuclear safety in Pakistan) and creating nuisance remains a possibility. Moreover, unlike the case of India-Pakistan relations, rivalry between the US and the Soviet Union was not based on contending notions of national identity. For both India and Pakistan, Kashmir plays an extremely important role in state identity. and none of the two sides would be willing to compromise on it. The will to acquire a piece of land may be every bit as strong as the will to defend it. The rivalry and the willingness to escalate in a contest over Kashmir, despite

nuclear weapons, make wars more dangerous even if they are limited in nature and scope.

To sum up, the case of India-Pakistan relations tells us how the nature of war has transformed due to the impact of nuclear weapons. All-out conventional war has been replaced by Limited War where the use of force is circumscribed and is commensurate with the limited political objectives that nations aim to achieve. Even if nuclear armed nations stumble into war, annihilation of the adversary can longer be an objective. This is what we have witnessed in the Indo-Pak equation, Indian actions have been extremely circumspect so as not to provoke the use of nuclear weapons by Pakistan. The sole objective has been to provide a push back to the terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK). The fear of Pakistan using nuclear weapons early in a crisis is also misplaced if we dissect Islamabad's strategic behaviour across the three instances- Kargil, Uri and Balakot. Also, the dilemmas surrounding the use of TNWs makes its threat redundant.

Though Pakistan has tried to project instability at the strategic level to continue sponsoring acts of terrorism in Kashmir and other Indian cities with impunity, India's military responses show that there is stability at the strategic level (which Pakistan would refuse to agree with) to conduct low-intensity conventional actions at the lower or tactical level. Third party intervention and concern for international reputation has also been responsible for defusing tensions in South Asia. However, factors peculiar to the India-Pakistan equation like geographical contiguity, possibility of armed forces using their discretion to act in crisis situations, chances of nuclear weapons falling in the hands of non-state actors, misperception and the high stakes involved in the dispute over Kashmir, distorts the foundational assumptions based on which the concept of Limited War came into existence during the Cold War.